

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-36. (Canceled)

37. (Currently amended) A method, comprising:

receiving a search query comprising a plurality of search terms from a user, wherein the search query includes [[a]] at least one user-selected operator associated with a first one of the search terms of the search query;

broadening the first one of the search terms based on the at least one user-selected operator to produce a broadened search query; and

executing a search using the broadened search query.

38. (Previously presented) The method of claim 37, wherein the search query further includes a user-selected delimiter associated with a second one of the search terms that indicates that the second one of the search terms should not be broadened.

39. (Previously presented) A method, comprising:

receiving a search query comprising a plurality of search terms;

broadening one of the plurality of search terms;

excluding the broadened one of the plurality of search terms from the search query;

executing a search based on the search query to provide search results; and

evaluating the search results relative to the excluded search term using categorical or clustered distinctions.

40. (New) The method of claim 37, wherein broadening the first one of the search terms comprises:

determining a meaning associated with the first one of the search terms.

41. (New) The method of claim 40, wherein broadening the first one of the search terms comprises:

determining a related concept based on the meaning.

42. (New) The method of claim 37, wherein broadening the first one of the search terms comprises:

modifying, replacing, supplementing, removing or restating the first one of the search terms.

43. (New) The method of claim 37, wherein broadening the first one of the search terms comprises:

selecting a broadening search term associated with the first one of the search terms from a set of words having a synonymous, alternate spelling, common root, or similar semantic meaning.

44. (New) The method of claim 37, wherein broadening the first one of the search terms comprises:

presenting at least one broadened search term associated with the first one of the search terms as at least one of a static list, a menu of selectable search terms, a set of checkboxes or a list of selectable search terms; and

receiving a selection from the presented at least broadened search term from the user.

45. (New) The method of claim 37, wherein broadening the first one of the search terms comprises:

presenting at least one broadened search characteristic associated with the first one of the search terms as a hyperlink; and

forming the broadened search query responsive to a selection of the hyperlink by the user.

46. (New) The method of claim 37, wherein the at least one user-selected operator comprises a plurality of operators, wherein the plurality of operators comprise a same operator repeated multiple times.

47. (New) The method of claim 46, wherein broadening the first one of the search terms based on the at least one user-selected operator to produce a broadened search query comprises:

broadening the first one of the search terms to an extent determined by a number of times the same operator is repeated in the at least one user-selected operator.

48. (New) A method, comprising:

receiving a first search query comprising a plurality of terms;

excluding a first term of the plurality of terms from the first search query to produce a second search query;

executing a first search based on the second search query to retrieve first search results;

mapping the first search results into related terms that are associated with the first term;

and

executing a second search based on a third search query that includes the plurality of terms and the related terms to retrieve second search results.

49. (New) A method, comprising:

receiving a search query comprising a plurality of search terms from a user, wherein the search query includes a user-assigned strength associated with a first one of the search terms of the search query;

broadening the first one of the search terms to an extent determined by the user-assigned strength to produce a broadened search query; and

executing a search based on the broadened search query.

50. (New) The method of claim 49, wherein the user-assigned strength includes multiple operators and wherein a number of the multiple operators determine the extent to which the first one of the search terms is broadened.

51. (New) The method of claim 49, wherein the search query further includes a user-selected delimiter associated with a second one of the search terms that indicates that the second one of the search terms should not be broadened.

52. (New) The method of claim 49, wherein broadening the first one of the search terms comprises:

determining a meaning associated with the first one of the search terms.

53. (New) The method of claim 52, wherein broadening the first one of the search terms comprises:

determining a related concept based on the meaning.

54. (New) The method of claim 49, wherein broadening the first one of the search terms comprises:

modifying, replacing, supplementing, removing or restating the first one of the search terms.

55. (New) The method of claim 49, wherein broadening the first one of the search terms comprises:

selecting a broadening search term associated with the first one of the search terms from a set of words having a synonymous, alternate spelling, common root, or similar semantic meaning.

56. (New) The method of claim 49, wherein broadening the first one of the search terms comprises:

presenting at least one broadened search term associated with the first one of the search terms as at least one of a static list, a menu of selectable search terms, a set of checkboxes or a list of selectable search terms; and

receiving a selection from the presented at least broadened search term from the user.

57. (New) The method of claim 49, wherein broadening the first one of the search terms comprises:

presenting at least one broadened search characteristic associated with the first one of the search terms as a hyperlink; and

forming the broadened search query responsive to a selection of the hyperlink by the user.